

S E C R E T

21 February 1978

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Rhodesia Briefing

1. Some of the reasoning in the briefing paper prepared on 17 February is not developed fully.

2. In the near term we have said the two key questions are "Will Nkomo play?" and "What will the Russians do?"

3. We've said that Nkomo wants to be top dog. We've said that if he plays in the internal settlement he'll very likely lose. On the other hand if he stays out and fights the Russians will support him. Therefore, if he is rational about it, the two critical issues not developed seem to be:

--How does Nkomo see Kaunda jumping if some internal settlement is developing and Nkomo stays out? We have said Kaunda is not enraptured with his guests, but also that he is an avid black nationalist. We haven't given a sense of how he will come out.

--How effective does Nkomo think the Rhodesian security forces are? Obviously they are good enough to defeat ZAPU and ZANU face to face. However, this only requires the black population's abstinence from open hostility to the Rhodesian forces. Under the best of circumstances black voting will be a positive act of opposition to ZAPU and ZANU. Are Rhodesian security forces strong enough to neutralize intimidating threats? Does Nkomo know the answer?

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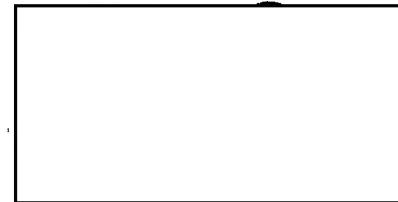
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For example, is it possible that widespread African press accusations that he was refusing to participate in an internal settlement only from selfish personal ambition would sting his pride enough to make him participate?

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5. When one looks at the internal settlement from the black point of view are there really fatal flaws in it? For example, to an outsider Nkomo's criticism of tenure for white judges appears specious. All he'd have to do after an election is expand the judiciary and pack it with blacks but maybe this is not so. Do we see how a group of white jurists could stop land reform or other programs to which Nkomo is committed?



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